



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STUDENTS AND JOB SEEKERS WITH DISABILITIES PARTICIPATE IN MENTORING DAY *BUSINESSES ACROSS THE STATE SIGN ON FOR ACTIVITIES*

Nashville, Tenn. – Hundreds of students and job seekers with disabilities will have the opportunity to be mentored by people that are in positions of interest to them, thanks to a program called Disability Mentoring Day (DMD). The participants are clients of the Department of Human Services' Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). The division provides employment services to Tennesseans with disabilities. Mentoring day is traditionally observed on the third Wednesday in October.

DHS has teamed up with numerous businesses and institutions across the state, including Bridgestone Americas, Red Lobster restaurants, Verizon, Publix supermarkets, and the University of Tennessee. DRS clients will shadow workers in several areas, including customer service, engineering, human resources, information technology, advertising and public relations.

"Participating in DMD offers students and job seekers with disabilities first-hand insight into careers that they thought might be out of their reach," said DHS Assistant Commissioner for Rehabilitation Services Andrea Cooper. "By providing job shadowing and hands-on career exploration opportunities, businesses are realizing that people with disabilities are an untapped resource that can contribute greatly to their workforce."

Public-private partnerships are fundamental to the Mentoring Day program, which exposes government agencies, corporations, colleges and school districts, nonprofit organizations, and Mayors' and Governors' Committees to the disability community through their participation as mentors. Employer mentors have the chance to work closely with people with disabilities, identify potential employees, recruit interns, and learn about the experience of disability.

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) is the host of Disability Mentoring Day. The main public sponsor is the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

For more information on the Department's services to persons with disabilities, visit:
www.state.tn.us/humanserv/rehab/rehab_main.htm

For more information on national DMD activities, contact AAPD at 800-840-8844 (V/TTY), or visit the AAPD website at: www.dmd-aapd.org

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